

(12) UK Patent Application (19) GB (11) 2 327 628 (13) A

(43) Date of A Publication 03.02.1999

(21) Application No 9715713.5

(22) Date of Filing 26.07.1997

(71) Applicant(s)

Peerless Systems Limited
(Incorporated in the United Kingdom)
11 Walton Road, Pattinson North, WASHINGTON,
Tyne & Wear, NE38 8QA, United Kingdom

(72) Inventor(s)

John Parkin

(74) Agent and/or Address for Service

Peerless Systems Limited
11 Walton Road, Pattinson North, WASHINGTON,
Tyne & Wear, NE38 8QA, United Kingdom

(51) INT CL⁶

B01L 3/02

(52) UK CL (Edition Q)

B1X X2

U1S S1891

(56) Documents Cited

GB 1477605 A

GB 1463807 A

GB 1414487 A

EP 0264704 A2

EP 0155087 A2

EP 0152120 A2

US 5364595 A

US 5156811 A

US 4299258 A

(58) Field of Search

UK CL (Edition P) B1X X2

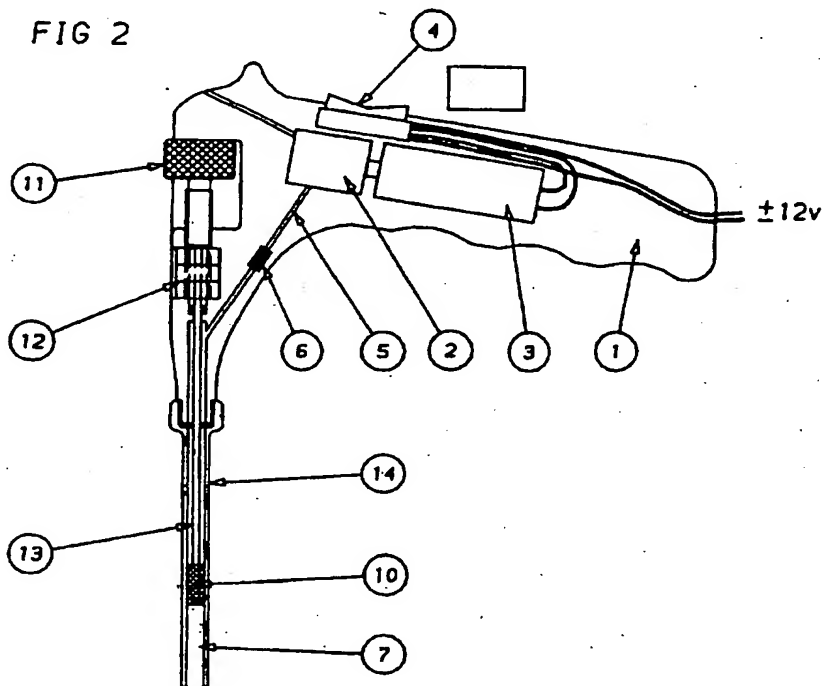
INT CL⁶ B01L 3/02 11/00, G01F 11/00, G01N 1/04
1/14

Online : CLAIMS, WPI

(54) Abstract Title

Powder pipette with replaceable tip

(57) An automatic hand-held pipette for sampling and transferring powder has a vacuum unit 2,3 with a replaceable tip 14. A filter 10, which may be fixed or movable, prevents the powder being drawn into the vacuum unit and defines the upper boundary of the working volume 7 of the pipette. In another embodiment (Fig 3) the pipette body is connected to a remote vacuum source for use in a fully automated robotic system.



GB 2 327 628 A

FIG 1

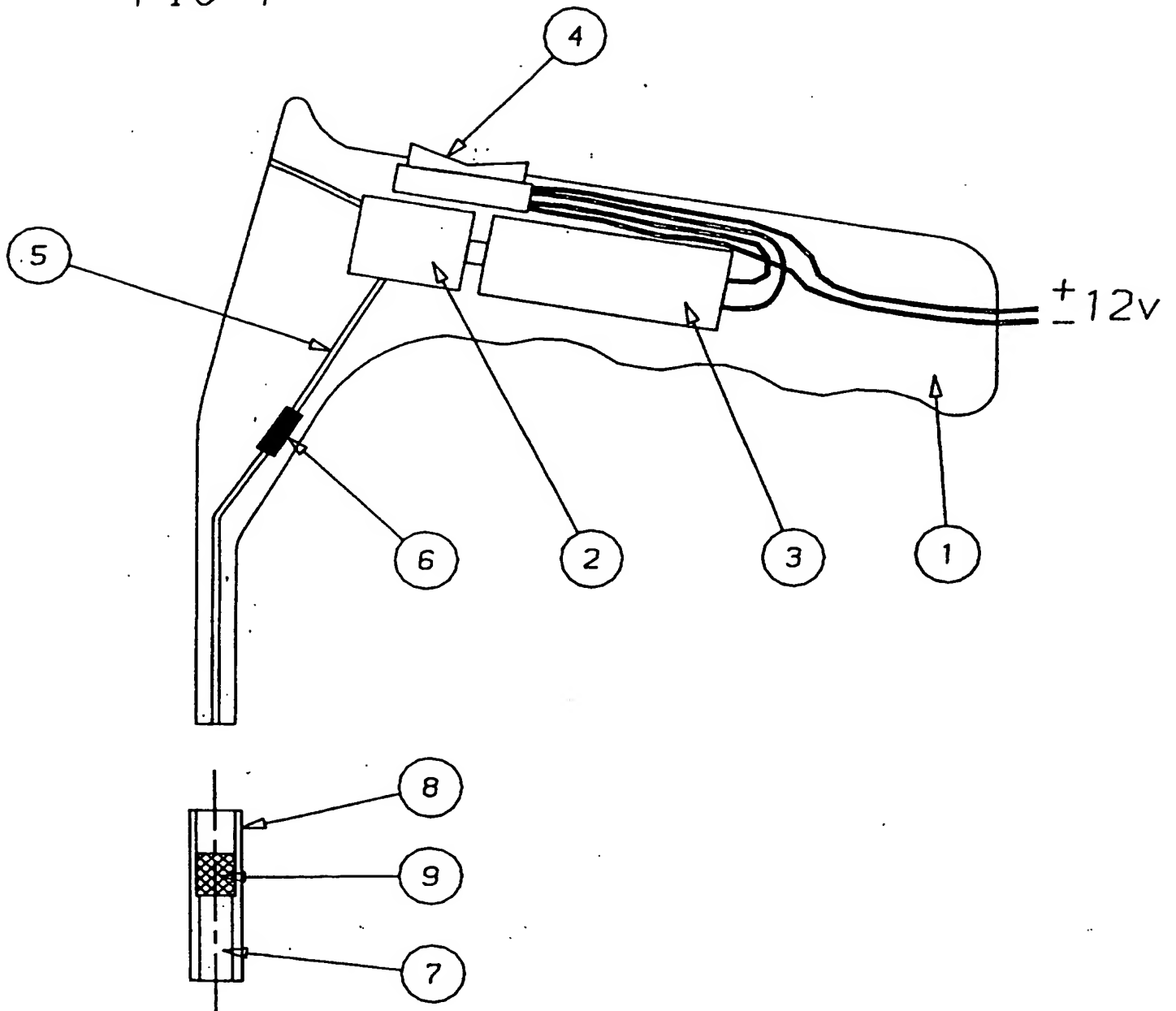


FIG 2

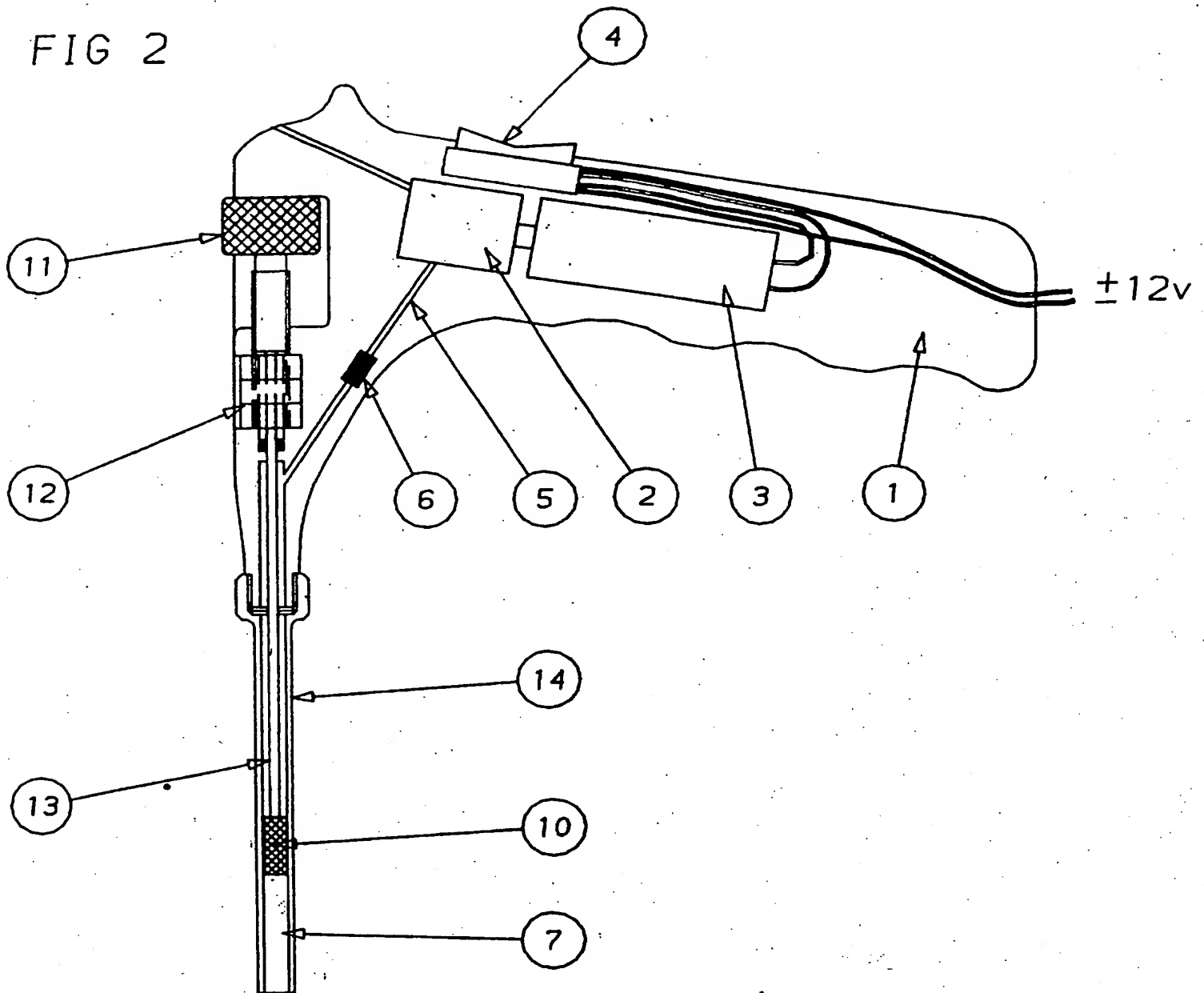
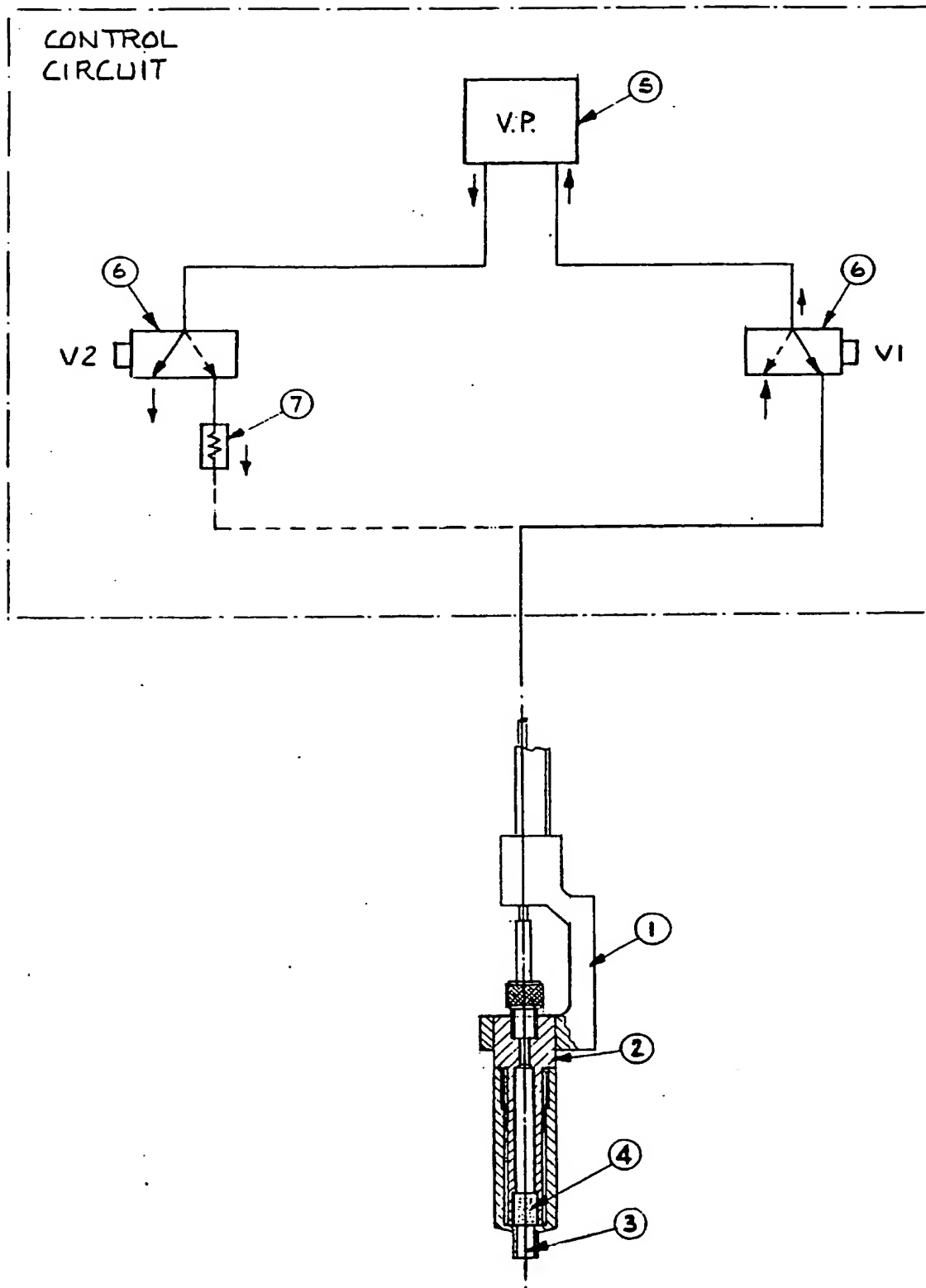


FIG. 3

3/3



(PANEL A)

- 1 -

Automatic Powder Pipette.

This invention relates to an automatic powder pipette.

The term 'pipette' normally describes a device for the transfer of liquids. It has been adopted, in this instance, to describe a device which can be used to transfer powder in a similar manner, by withdrawing it into a tube and releasing it as required.

The present invention describes three types of powder pipette, all of which operate on the same principle. Each relies on the powder being drawn into the pipette under vacuum, and expelled under positive pressure as required. Replaceable filters prevent powder from entering the vacuum generating unit.

Two of the pipettes described (Figs 1 and 2), are for hand-held use, while the third (Fig 3) is designed for use in automated systems.

Specific embodiments of the invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawing in which:-

Figure 1 shows, in cross section, a fixed volume powder pipette for use with disposable tips.

Figure 2 shows, in cross section, a variable volume powder pipette.

Figure 3 shows, in cross section, a fixed volume powder pipette for use in automated systems.

PANEL B

- 2 -

Hand-held powder pipettes

Referring to the drawings (Figs 1 and 2), the powder pipette comprises a hand-held unit, 1, incorporating a rotary vane vacuum pump, 2, driven by a 12 v DC motor, 3. A three position switch, 4, allows the motor to be switched in forward or reverse directions to supply negative or positive pressures in the vacuum line, 5. A supplementary filter, 6, protects the pump from the ingress of particulate matter.

The fixed volume pipette, illustrated in Figure 1, employs a disposable tip, 8, which has an integral filter, 9. The volume of sample withdrawn (area 7), depends upon the size of tip, 8, which is employed.

The variable volume pipette, illustrated in Fig. 2, allows the sample volume (area 7) to be varied by raising or lowering the position of filter 10. A thumb screw adjuster, 11, allows the height of the filter support rod, 13, to be varied. A digital indicator, 12, shows the position of the filter support rod, 13. The barrel, 14, of the pipette can be unscrewed for cleaning or replacement of the filter, 10.

Powder pipette for use in automated systems

Referring to the drawing (Fig. 3), the pipette body, 1, is designed to affix to the z axis of an x,y,z, robot. Replacement tips, 2, screw attach to the pipette body to allow the sample volume (area 3) to be varied. A replaceable filter, 4, protects the vacuum pump from the ingress of particulate matter. Negative and positive air pressures are generated by a vacuum pump, 5, with directional flows controlled by valves, 6. A flow controller, 7, allows the positive pressure to be regulated.

PANEL C

- 3 -

CLAIMS.

1. **A hand-held powder pipette, with in-built vacuum generator for use with disposable tips.**
2. **A disposable tip, with integral filter, for use with the powder pipette in Claim 1.**
3. **A variable volume powder pipette, with in-built vacuum generator as in Claim 1, with adjustably positioned filter in the sampling barrel.**
4. **A powder pipette for use in automated systems, with replaceable tips for volume selection, and remote controls.**
5. **Powder pipettes, substantially as described herein, with reference to Figures 1-3 of the accompanying drawing.**



Application No: GB 9715713.5
Claims searched: ALL

Examiner: R E Hardy
Date of search: 28 January 1998

Patents Act 1977
Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.P): B1X (X2)

Int Cl (Ed.6): B01L (3/02 11/00); G01F (11/00); G01N (1/04 1/14)

Other: Online : CLAIMS, WPI

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage			Relevant to claims
X	GB1477605	A	SOC DES VERRES : Note porous plug 2	1 at least
X,Y	GB1463807	A	WELLCOME : See filter 4	1,2 at least
X	GB1414487	A	BETTS : See plug 13 which is movable (p.2 lines 69-71)	1,3 at least
Y	EP0264704	A2	EPPENDORF : See Figure 4, separable tip with filter 4	2,4 at least
X,Y	EP0155087	A2	AMERICAN HOSPITAL : Whole document	1,4 at least
X,Y	EP0152120	A2	RAININ : Whole document	1,4 at least
X	US5364595	A	SMITH : Note filter 12	1,2 at least
X	US5156811	A	WHITE : Note filter 18	1,2 at least
X	US4299258	A	BRITE : Whole document	1 at least

X Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step
Y Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.
& Member of the same patent family

A Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
P Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
E Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.